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## NMCI User Satisfaction Rising, Study Shows

By David McGlinchey

Military personnel are increasingly satisfied with the Navy Marine Corps Intranet project, according to statistics released by program officials Wednesday.

The massive intranet system is being developed by Texas-based contractor EDS to connect hundreds of thousands of service members and civilian employees in a secure network. EDS invested a large amount of its own money to initially fund the project, but NMCI could eventually cost the Navy more than \$8 billion.

NMCI satisfaction rates had reached almost 80 percent by June -- an increase of about 20 percent since the beginning of the year. The NMCI data showed customer satisfaction rates at 60 percent in early 2004 and about 50 percent in late 2003.

Those numbers closely track customer satisfaction results that program officials have been touting in recent months, but are in contrast to recent statements by NMCI users. At an NMCI conference in New Orleans in June, senior officers from the Navy and Marine Corps sharply criticized the program.

In subsequent interviews, several lower-ranking officers and Navy civilians also expressed dissatisfaction. Some users said the network was not an improvement over legacy systems, and others suggested that satisfaction rates remained high because the survey respondents were mostly high-ranking officers in the Pentagon.

"If I'm some admiral sitting up in the program, I get ultimate service. Basically all I'm doing is generating e-mails or Word files or something like that, but I'm not a worker bee, I'm not where the rubber meets the road," said a senior Navy civilian employee who works outside of Washington and spoke on condition of anonymity.

In their presentation Wednesday, NMCI officials said about 30 percent of users are responding to the online surveys. Program leaders have said previously that 80 percent satisfaction is not a sufficiently high user satisfaction level.

Officials outlined several problem areas they intended to address, including the reliability of the network and the ability to quickly resolve problems.